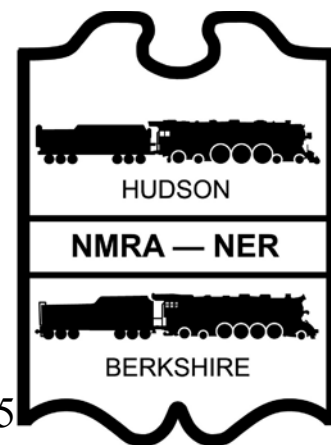


# FORM 19

## The Official Newsletter of the Hudson-Berkshire Division of the NMRA



Order Number 307

January 2015

Next Meeting Friday January 16 at 7:00 PM

Artie Krass

Another JMRI Application for Model Railroaders

**The Java Model Railroad Interface**

**Decoder Pro 3**

Malta Community Center

The primary purpose of Decoder Pro 3 is to help you maintain a roster of your locomotives and to be able to read and program decoder configuration variables (CV's). You can add (create), modify and delete locomotives from the roster; read from the installed decoder the details of the current CV settings; program new values for the CV's and then download those new settings to the decoder with your locomotive on the programming track or simply store them on your computer. There are several different programming interfaces to achieve this. Decoder Pro 3 maintains a list of decoders on the market, and updates to this list are readily available.

By registering the individual decoder identity information, Decoder Pro can build a list of the decoders and associated locomotive information for the engines that you have on your layout. The CV settings for each decoder can then be stored in this database and reentered into the decoder at any time using the interface. Thus if you try different variable values and you don't like the results it is easy to reset all values. This can also be very useful if one wants to run an engine on a club or another individuals layout, allowing multiple sets of settings that are easily changed.

Decoder Pro provides three levels of user-decoder interface:

- Basic - A simple one, with just the most popular information

- Comprehensive - The most complete display, with multiple panes of detailed information

- Advanced Panes are accessed separately using buttons on the DecoderPro3 interface.

Whether you have been using DCC for a while or just getting started, this presentation will make you more aware of what can be/needs to be done changing the settings for the decoders you use.

Artie will be presenting an introductory overview of Decoder Pro 3 and then, using the NCE interface, will demonstrate the practical use of the application.

As with all of the JMRI applications all of the necessary software can be download from the JMRI site and there is numerous forms of documentation, forums and user groups. All JMRI software is free to download at

[jmri.sourceforge.net](http://jmri.sourceforge.net)

Directions on page 3

[www.hudson-berkshire.org](http://www.hudson-berkshire.org)





## Form19

The Form19 is published eight times per year for members of the Hudson Berkshire Division and for newsletter subscribers (at \$12.00 per year).

The opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect those of the Division. Products and publications mentioned in Form19 in no way constitute an endorsement by the Division.

### **Contributing to the Form19**

The Form19 staff welcomes all contributions. Letters, articles, photos, and other items may be mailed or e-mailed to the editor. Please include a note if you would like materials returned. Suggestions also welcome.

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# The Ready Line By Paul Hoffman

The Form19 Editor received the following message:

In light of a recent series of unfortunate events, the author of the Ready Line begs your forgiveness for lack of suitable column. The next installment will, hopefully, appear in the February issue of the Form 19. He regrets any inconvenience this may have caused.

To fill the space, the staff has chosen to present the following picture of a new street car (tram). Perhaps you readers have gathered that the Editor has a bit of nostalgia & regret for the loss of the streetcar in American cities at the end of the 1940's and early 1950's. It seems to him that this fostered a significant change in our society as people no longer met at 'trolley stops' and that that was a significant force in the demise of the sense of community. It certainly forced a change in our way of life. European nations have maintained and continue to develop inter-urban rail transportation and the intra-urban streetcar - which they refer to as the 'tram.'

This tram was recently presented by its developing company as a new design (that certainly seems true by just looking at it) with features that will make it attractive and salable throughout Europe. Yes, this vehicle was built by the company as a demo unit without orders or commitments from any city; totally on speculation. That's a lot to invest unless one has a good sense of the desire for modern transportation that is prevalent in the people and the governments.



Anyone want to speculate on where this was built? What country has such design and engineering talent?



### Location - Location - Location

Artie Krass's presentation on JMRI's Decoder Pro is at the Malta Community Center, One Bayberry Drive, Malta, NY. This is the first building on the left after you enter Bayberry Drive from Route 9.

Route 9 is east of Exit 12 of I-87 (The Northway), through some roundabouts.

North on Route 9 (nominal left). Bayberry Drive is the first left past Allerdice Hardware. If coming south on 9, Bayberry is the first right past Cocca's Motel.

Promptness is appreciated as we only have the use of the Community Center room for a limited amount of time.

### The Internet of Things (IoT)

If you have a high speed internet connection and have been 'rumaging around' the internet, you know there is a lot of 'stuff' out there and that there is even more coming.

One of the things that you might have found is a video of a ride on George Selios's Franklin & Manchester Railroad. Yes, that's right, a ride on that spectacular model railroad. The videographer used one of the new 'Go Pro' cameras mounted on a rail car and the results are phenomenal. If you go to Youtube.com and search on 'Franklin & Manchester' you will find several videos but the one you want is by Vikas Chander. Or, you can go to [www.VikasChander.com](http://www.VikasChander.com) and find that and other great model railroad videos.

Another great videos is one of the "City Edge Layout." Do an internet search on that to find a very nice shelf style layout with great, realistic detail. Again, the videographers and photograpers have done good work with this layout. One video in particular uses a sound

track of real trains well coordinated with the layout video.

And if you want to see some great modeling AND some super model railroad photography, go to <https://www.facebook.com/FredLagno?fref=nf> or check out <https://www.flickr.com/photos/fredlagno/>. Absolutely amazing and edifying. Gives one a smile and, perhaps, a bit of motivation.

And you may have heard recently of the term 'internet of things' where people are connecting their TV, refrigerator, heating/cooling system, coffee maker, etc. to the internet simply because their microprocessors allow wi-fi connection. This may not be a good thing. Recently there was a spam attack on a website (site received an overwhelming number of emails) from a refrigerator. Yes, someone had hacked an appliance to send offending emails. And just recently, someone has found a way to send ads to that video display on the dash of your new car. Oh, joy.



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## Almost Hidden Treasure

By the Form19 staff

Another (almost) hidden treasure of the Hudson-Berkshire Division is located on the western shore of Lake Champlain, twenty minutes drive north of Plattsburgh, NY.

Fred Gemmill and his wife live on Sunnywood in Chazy, NY. No, there is no 'Street', 'Drive' or 'Court' after that—just 'Sunnywood'. And if you look up his address on [maps.google.com](https://maps.google.com), you are shown a spot in the middle of a wood. That really shook up the *Form19* staffer planning the visit to Fred. Mapquest.com show the path and does indeed label it just 'Sunnywood'. And you had better study the map very carefully to find your way.

The effort of the drive (2&1/2 hours from the Form19 headquarters building) and watching for the turns richly rewarded our visitors. The home is lovely, the view out the basement patio doors is of a lush green lawn leading to the water's edge (one might be tempted to stand there and enjoy the view for a long time) and the layout in that fully finished basement is amazing.

Indeed, after a warm welcome, the Form19 photographer and his assistant followed Fred down the stairs to a layout that goes on and on, filling a 23' x 30' space. There are curves, twists and a long, long mainline. The layout is in N-scale with track down and structures going up and lots and lots of space for more N-scale structures and scenery – which Fred is just starting. What he has completed has taken considerable planning and effort and dedication. There were so many interesting features and ideas that the staff wanted to continue the visit but had other stops to cover, so we present some of the highlights.

Fred's father had Lionel trains, so Fred knew about model trains at a very early age. But at fourteen he visited an HO layout and was hooked on scale modeling and been involved ever since. In 1997 he began a layout at his home in Pearl River, NY and developed it and his skills. After retirement, he moved to his current location and began the current layout in 2007 incorporating sections of the previous layout. The plans for the many base sections and another chart showing where to put the rail are posted on the blue backdrop to keep him and session operators 'on track' (oh, couldn't resist that). The railroad is the Pembina & Missouri Valley Southern (P&MVS). It is a regional railroad based in East Jamestown, ND doing all local switching for the customers on its two branches. Pembina is on the Eastern branch close to the Canadian boarder and

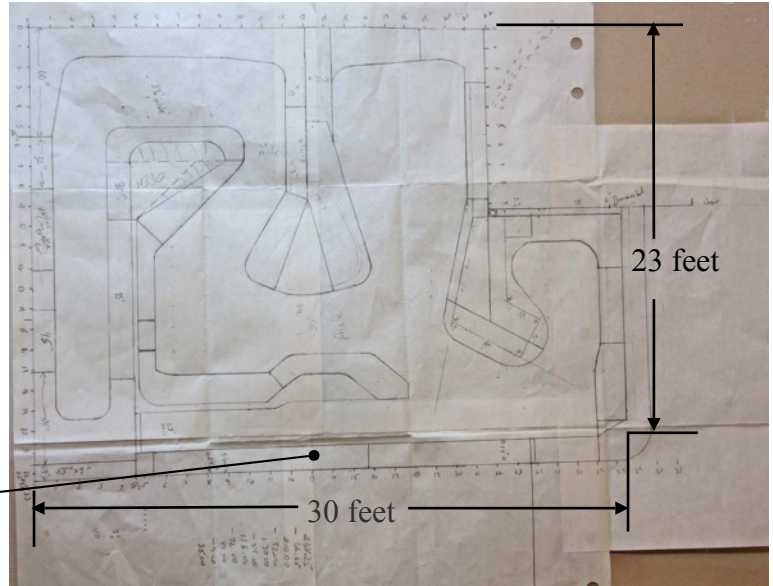
where the P&MVS interchanges with the CN. It interchanges with the BN at the E. Jamestown yard. The BN also delivers to Johnsville which has its own switcher. All mainline trains are BN over the mainline between Bismark and Fargo, ND, originally the Northern Pacific.

Fred uses Micro Engineering code 55 track with some code 40 on spurs all anchored with latex caulk. He has two different methods of switch control. He uses air operated controllers on most switches with the controlling air toggles mounted on the track diagram boards above the layout. This makes the line selection readily apparent. On track switches near the edge of the layout, he uses a unique controller based on electric paddle handle toggles from a design in a 2003 'N-Scale Railroading' – see photos. This arrangement holds the points under load and provides electrical routing of power for DCC. And for DCC, Fred uses Digitrax with wireless controllers with five zones of circuit breaker protection. For operating sessions, he uses switch lists and four to six two-man crews.

The first photo on the next page is of Fred by his work area and between two yards. The open drawers show how he has nearly double the car storage by using trays that rest on glides at the front and back of each drawer to create a second layer and yet allowing easy access by sliding the trays sideways. Note all the cars in that yard and just look at what is in those drawers. Wow, there can be a lot of track space in N-scale allowing long trains that need lots of cars. Unit trains of forty and fifty cars are not uncommon during operating sessions.

The second picture shows the plan for all of the layout base sections. The reader can readily see that this plan creates areas that are visually isolated from each other. This explains why the *Form19* photographer did not get an overview shot of the layout. And he needed a wider angle than the minimum of his zoom lens to get good over-all shots in the individual sections. So the photographer has provided a few extended photos and many close ups of individual features that you see in the remaining photos. These may provide you with some ideas of structures and businesses that you might use on your layouts. And if you are considering a building for your layout, Fred suggests you might want to create a card stock version to test location, fit and appearance.

There are more photos in the extended pages of the online version of the *Form19*; be sure to check them out.

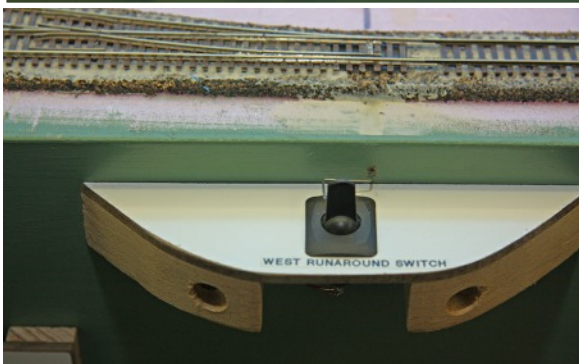


Fred Gemmill standing at a work bench/storage unit showing the many cars it takes to keep a large N-scale layout well stocked. The combination of scale and size allows running of 40 and 50 car trains and sometimes larger.

The benchwork diagram shows the peninsular style of the layout.



The largest industry on the layout is the famous "John's Ceramics", makers of fine porcelain fixtures. It has multiple sidings and requires several types of cars to serve the manufacturing. Those white cars are bringing in kaolin, a fine clay type mineral. Kaolin gives the fixtures the very smooth surface finish. The complex is nearly 5 feet long; 800 feet un-scaled.



On the fascia in front of the factory and in the picture to the left you can see how Fred has used toggle switches with stiff wire mounted in holes in the paddle handle to effect the switch throw as well as routing the power for the turnout. The bend in the wire at the handle provides a spring action to hold the points tight and eliminates the need for fine tuning the throw distance.



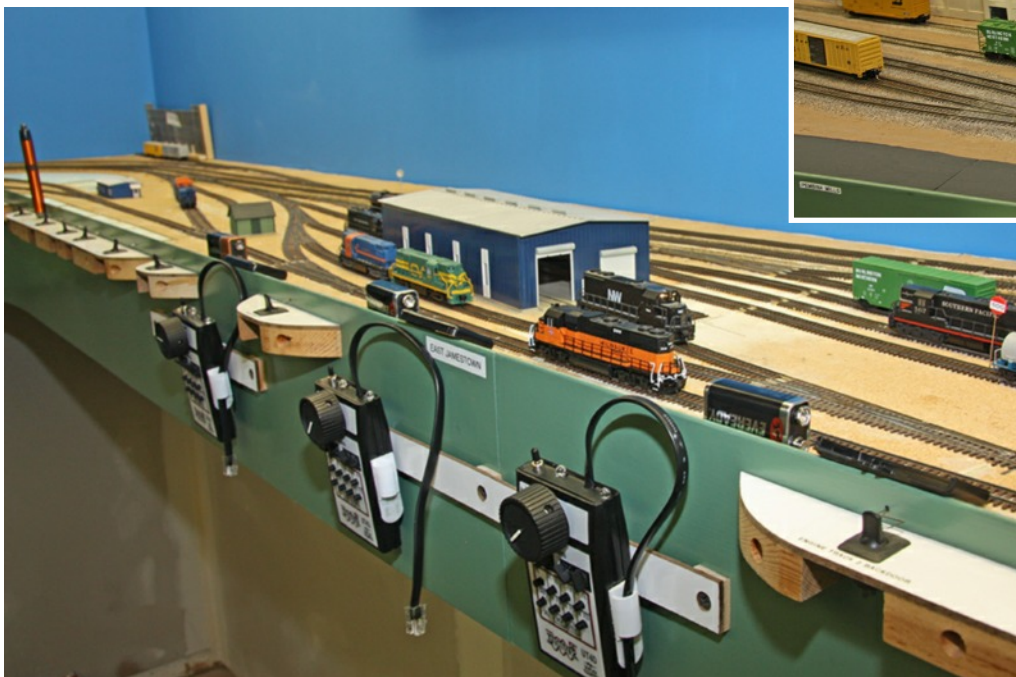
That's John's Ceramics in the background, other industries along the way and a lumber distributor in the foreground.

On the wall overhead is the track diagram for each area with air switches at each junction to control the appropriate turnout. A small pancake style compressor provides all the air needed for the layout. A pressure regulator maintains the line pressure at about 30 psi.



At the lumber distributor a forklift is moving large bundles of lumber, many enclosed in the identifying protective wrap of the original producer. Fred says that the bundles actually come in kits with the wrapping separate, ready to test the skill and patience of the modeler.

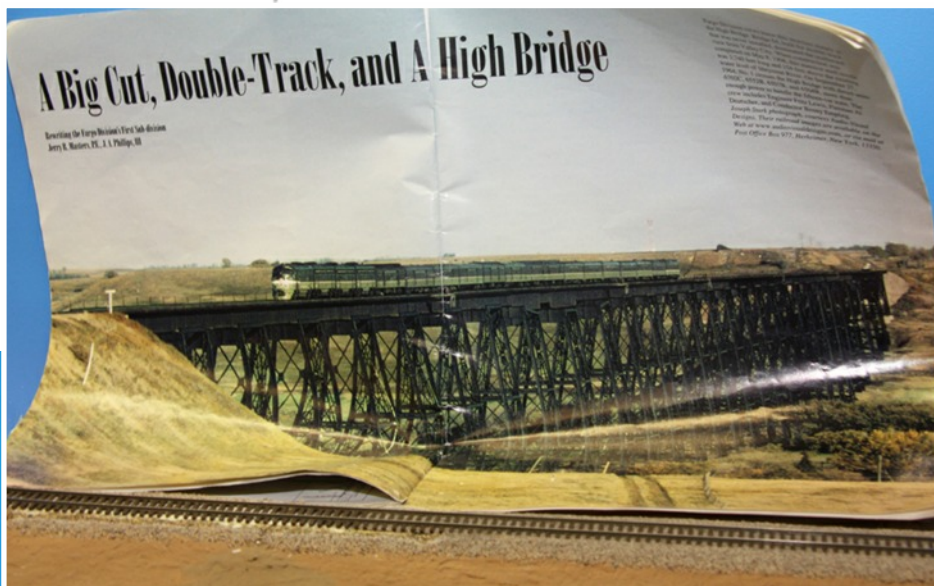
That's Pembina Flour Mill of Pembina, ND to the right. Pembina is an actual town (population 695) in the very north-east corner of North Dakota next to the Minnesota and Canadian borders. Not a place most of us would want to be in the winter. Here the P&MVS interchanges with the CN and continues on to serve Walhalla, ND.



That's the engine service facility at East Jamestown, ND to the left. Each Digitrax controller has a clip on the back that readily slides over the spaced strips that Fred has on the fascia. The white plastic pieces on the sides of the controllers corral the antennas and keep them from hitting an engine or an eye. The orange thing at the far left is one of the many penlights with uncoupler sticks fastened to them that are around the layout.



Every layout needs a bridge and this one will eventually have a replica of that gargantuan structure to the right. That's the bridge over the Sheyenne River at Valley City, ND (between Bismark & Fargo) in the picture. It was originally built in 1909 for two tracks. It's going to take a lot of time to build the model bridge ....

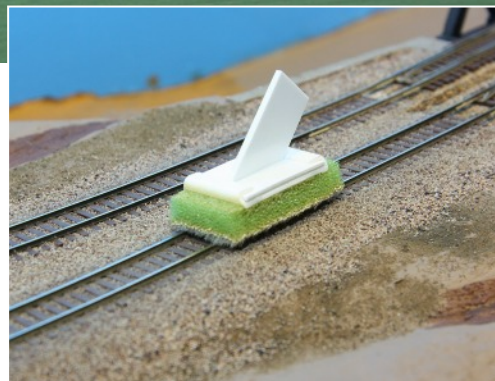


... so Fred has improvised a bridge-like support system to get the trains running in the mean time. One could even go ahead and do much of the 'final grading' and then put in ground cover leaving just spaces for the bases of the bridge bents. A neat way of operating while the layout is 'in process.'



Having 100's of feet of track means having to keep 100's of feet of track clean. Fred uses the standard tank with cleaning fluid (above, right) and also uses a motorized unit in a boxcar to add a bit more polish to the rail head. This unit has the advantage of not dragging the same bit of pad over all the rail. They must work very well as Fred's little N-scale engines didn't miss a beat - even pulling 50 car trains.

And speaking of pad, that is the central part of a small painting pad at the right. Fred has trimmed the 'bristles' to just touch the ties and uses it to spread and level ballast - really neat.





### Lake Luzerne Senior Citizens Center Railroad

Above to the left is a picture of the LLSCC RR Christmas display module. To the right is a close up showing all the little tiny presents that have been carefully wrapped and tied with ribbon and fancy bows.

The Lake Luzerne Senior Center director set up the scene in the spirit of Christmas using ceramic structures and other items often associated with the season. As she was finishing, someone said, "It really needs a train."

Interesting how people make that connection.

Daisy Kavanagh, H-B Division member Joe Kavanagh's wife, said, "I think we have a train for that."

Over 30 years ago, Daisy and Joe put together a holiday themed train that they ran on an HO modular layout on Long Island one December weekend each year.

For many years the European American Bank Plaza in Uniondale held a weekend with tree lighting and ice skating outdoors and with Santa and much more indoors. Schools brought their choirs and bands to sing and play and thousands of people visited. The HOTrak group set up a layout and Daisy and Joe manned it as volunteers.

Fast forward 20+ years and a move to upstate New York and Daisy asks Joe where the train was that they had made. Well, they found it, refurbished it, and set it up on the display. Amazing! (And I, like you the reader, have a hard time remembering where I put the January issue of MR that I was reading yesterday. Editor)

Is there a way that you could add a train to a local display – at a local historical group, a senior citizens group, etc. ? Or perhaps you can put somebody in the H-B Division in contact with someone requesting aid with a display.



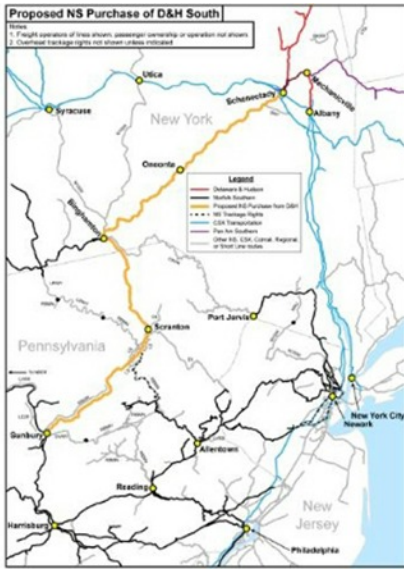
NRE rebuilt SD40 working at BNSF's Galesburg, IL hump yard

BNSF has been testing a National Railway Equipment high-adhesion NR33CDE-IAC locomotive, an EMD SD40-2 that has been modified to increase tractive effort and adhesion. NRE says the unit is showing "promising results." NRE equipped the six-axle locomotive with a 3,300hp propulsion platform and with NRE's NFORCE microprocessor, traction control card and Independent Axle Control (IAC) modules. NRE says the locomotive is achieving a tractive effort of 33%-34%. Fully fueled, the locomotive weighs 385,000 pounds.

No. 4321 is developing 128,975 lbf tractive effort. And a Big Boy with tender weighed 1,250,000 lb and generated 135,375 lbf ta. The NRE engine is replacing two of the three units normally used in hump service. Fuel consumption is greatly reduced. Impressive.



## 2015 Outlook



The Class 1 railroads have reported exceptional increases in traffic and increases in profits for 2014 and are looking ahead to 2015 with mixed feelings. Model railroaders are looking forward with mixed feelings also. Here are some of the concerns of both.

Norfolk Southern continued to grow during the third quarter of 2014, with overall revenue climbing 7% to \$3.02 billion. Net income came in at \$559 million, up 16% from the year-ago level and producing earnings per share of \$1.79 on a diluted basis. CEO Wick Moorman touted the three-month period as "another record-setting quarter" and cited unprecedented levels in those figures, as well as in operating income and operating ratio. To increase its market for 2015, NS announced in December in a joint statement with Canadian Pacific Railroad that they have agreed to purchase the former D&H trackage from Sunbury, PA to Schenectady, NY. This will give NS significantly greater access to the Boston and New England markets. It may also be bringing NS heritage units into the Northeast. See map.

The Class 1 railroads are concerned about 2015 because of a possible lack of resources to meet the consumer demands. There have been some local shortages of power and contention for track use. Railroads serving the northern plains areas in the US and Canada are being criticized for lack of both car and track capacity to move the grain from this years crops while still dealing with backlogs from last year's. Transportation agencies in both countries have ongoing investigations prompted by complaints from growers and shippers. Grain trains are having to share routes with increasing oil shipments and also coal for export traffic.

DCC has taken another turn as now at least one manufacturer is selling engines that allow the operation of trains without the purchase of expensive controller units or power commanders. Bachman has introduced

units which can be controlled with the user's cell phone using a downloadable app and Bluetooth connectivity. It appears that the track only needs to receive the standard AC power while all the control signals are sent directly to the engine decoder. It will be interesting to see if other manufacturers follow this lead.

3-D printers and associated software have been improving and are becoming more affordable. These are extremely useful for creating parts and accessories for modelers of all kinds. There are several online services that accept files from modelers and return the manufactured part. Some of the sites associated with this technology even have sections where modelers can purchase parts from the designers. A great way to add detail to your layout. Has anyone tried this yet?

What's going to happen on your layout in 2015?



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Coming up in 2015: Bus trip to Amherst Railroad Hobby Show January 24<sup>th</sup>; seats still available; send in form. Planning and committee action in preparation for the 2016 NER Pacemaker Convention. See a HB officer to volunteer and join in the fun. Some interesting 'how to' articles submitted by members.

The Amherst Railroad Hobby Show in Springfield will be on January 24th and 25th 2015. The Division bus trip will be on Saturday the 24th. There are still a few spaces available. Submit your form and check to Jack Cutler at Hudson Berkshire Division, PO Box 83, Clifton Park, NY 12065-0083.

Looking forward to sunny, warm weather, the end-of-year activity will be a picnic with and at the Adirondack Live steamers in June. More information as the snow melts.

Is there something that you would like to see in the Form19? Have you read an interesting article, visited a great website, read an interesting book? Mention items of interest, make requests and offer suggestions to the Form19 staff via email, postal mail, phone or corner one of them at a meeting. We need your input to make this interesting.

Please make every effort to meet and include our new members in our activities. There is nothing worse than joining a group and then being ignored. Don't let that happen! Reach out, encourage and welcome the new guys and gals! If you have ideas on how we can do a better job on this front please share them with a Division officer. If you are a new member, don't be afraid to introduce yourself and to ask questions.

Our intent is to be friendly and helpful



**SAVE THE DATES!**

**The Pacemaker**  
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 Albany, New York

**September 15 – 18 2016**

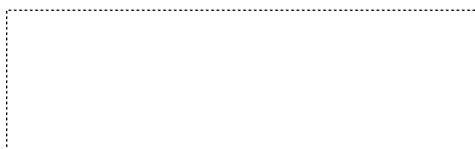
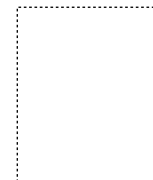
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## FORM 19

Hudson Berkshire Division  
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**First Class Mail**



Modular cabinets make for neat under layout storage. Here Fred has used two each of three different sizes/styles. And he has nearly doubled the storage of some of the top drawers by adding the sliding trays. By using two sliding trays with open space between that is nearly the same width as the trays, one can always see what is underneath without having to lift a tray, and risk damaging cars (or other content) if the tray tips.

There's a large grain elevator far right. The oil storage facility and trucking company can be right at home on any layout.

Here you have a good view of the tack plan overhead with the clearly defined switch controls.



Those are indeed Pacemaker boxcars on the bridge.

Fred has graciously agreed to have his layout open for at least some time period in conjunction with the NER Pacemaker Convention in September 2016.



That's MacGregor's Supply, above, and Casselton (ND) Precast, to the right. Such industries are not regionally specific and could be used on almost any layout. Both require car service.



Above is Jamestown Packers on the far side of the Jamestown, ND yard where the P&MVS interchanges with the BN. On this side is a small intermodal yard. Both could show up on any reasonably modern layout. To the left is a loadout facility. It might be coal, stone, salt, whatever is appropriate to your layout.

Wow, those engines are long - and green. It is amazing how much detail is in N-scale when you look carefully.

